

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE VETOING SB No. 497

I am today filing in the office of the Secretary of State Senate Bill No. 497. I have not approved this bill for the reason that the same carries a penalty ranging from two years in the penitentiary to death. I am opposed to the death penalty and cannot conscientiously approve any bill which carries a penalty of death for its violation.

Before definitely deciding to file this bill without my approval, I caused to be made an investigation into the laws of the State of Texas and into the laws of the United States to determine if the person committing the offenses set forth in this bill could be punished under either the laws of this State or of the United States. The result of this investigation reveals that every offense described in this bill could be punished under twenty-one or more statutes already in existence as a part of the laws of the State of Texas and are grouped under the heading of "Offenses Against Property" in Vernon's Texas Revised Civil Statutes 1925. Also the eleven or more laws of the United States make most of the offenses set forth in this bill offenses against the United States with punishment ranging from small fines up to death when such offenses are committed as acts of treason against the United States. Therefore, I am certain that my failure to approve this bill would not encourage anyone to commit acts of sabotage feeling that they cannot be punished, since this bill would, if approved by me, be cumulative of all the thirty-two or more other laws now in existence concerning the acts made offenses by this bill.

As a safeguard, however, and in order to show my appreciation of the motives of the Texas Senators who sponsored this bill, and show my desire to cooperate with them by endeavoring to give it nationwide application instead of only application in one State I intend to carry a copy of the bill with me to Washington and introduce it in the United States Senate, changed only to the extent of providing a maximum penalty more severe than the death sentence.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name officially and caused the Seal of State to be impressed hereon at Austin, this the 23rd day of July, A. D., 1941.

W. Lee O'Daniel
Governor of Texas

Wm. J. Lawson
Secretary of State